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NEWS RELEASE For Immediate Release



September 11, 2015
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VESICULAR STOMATITIS DIAGNOSED IN SCOTTS BLUFF COUNTY HORSE

LINCOLN – A case of Vesicular Stomatitis (VS) has been confirmed in a horse in Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska, by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA). State Veterinarian Dr. Dennis Hughes said today the horse and other livestock on the farm have been placed under quarantine.

VS is a viral disease which primarily affects horses and cattle, but can also affect sheep, goats and swine. The virus that causes VS, Vesicular Stomatitis Virus (VSV), typically harbors in southern Mexico in the winter months, and periodically moves north into the United States. At this time, VSV has affected horses and cattle in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming and South Dakota. In affected livestock, VSV causes blister-like lesions to form in the mouth and on the dental pad, tongue, lips, nostrils, hooves and teats. As a result of the lesions, infected animals may refuse to eat and drink, which leads to severe weight loss.

Hughes is urging producers with animals that might be experiencing these symptoms to contact their veterinarian immediately.

“Vesicular Stomatitis is typically transmitted in two primary ways, biting insects and midges, and nose-to-nose contact between a non-infected and infected animal,” said Dr. Hughes. “The best ways to reduce the chance of VS infection is to reduce the population of flies, mosquitoes and other biting insects as much as possible, and to isolate infected animals from uninfected animals.”

In recent months there have been several reported cases of VS confirmed in areas of Wyoming, Colorado and South Dakota that border the Nebraska Panhandle. Nebraska’s last confirmed cases of VS were last November in two cows in Wheeler County. Nebraska’s last major outbreak of the disease was in 2005.

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According to Hughes, the positive diagnosis might trigger animal import regulations in other states. Producers moving livestock from Nebraska into another state are encouraged to contact the state veterinarian's office in the state of destination to learn about specific import requirements.

Hughes said that due to the VS finding, he and officials for the AKSARBEN Stock Show and Rodeo, scheduled for Sept. 24-27, in Omaha, have agreed to put in place new requirements for horse and cattle exhibitors. Horses arriving at the show from anywhere within Nebraska will need to have seen a veterinarian within 48 hours. The 48-hour rule also will apply to any cattle coming to the show from the Nebraska Panhandle counties. These counties include Banner, Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Deuel, Garden, Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan and Sioux.

Hughes is encouraging managers of other upcoming horse and cattle exhibitions or shows in the state to consider enacting similar requirements.

"Until the weather gets cold, eliminating transmission vectors like flies and mosquitoes, there is still a chance that we could see a spread of the disease," Hughes said. "Requiring a health check within two days before shows where animals come in will help protect against such spread."

For more information on VS visit: <http://www.nda.nebraska.gov/animal/diseases/vs/index.html>

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